



California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region

Karl E. Longley, ScD, P.E., Chair



Arnold
Schwarzenegger
Governor

Linda S. Adams

Secretary for
Environmental Protection

11020 Sun Center Drive #200, Rancho Cordova, California 95670-6114

Phone (916) 464-3291 • FAX (916) 464-4645

<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley>

24 June 2009

Gerald F. George
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pitman LLP
P.O. Box 7880
San Francisco, CA 94120-7880

DRAFT CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ORDERS FOR SULPHUR CREEK MINES, COLUSA COUNTY

We have reviewed your three letters dated 23 April 2009, that were primarily about Homestake Mining Company of California (Homestake) involvement in the Sulphur Creek Mine properties (Central Group Mines, Elgin Mine, and Wide Awake Mine). We generally agree with the history described in the letters however, based on our review and evaluation of the records received from Colusa County, below is our assessment of Homestake's involvement at the Sulphur Creek Mine properties.

Central Group Mines

Homestake both owned and leased property that included the Central, Cherry Hill, Empire, Manzanita, and West End Mines. While Homestake owned and leased the property, erosion would have occurred from the disturbed ground and from mining waste associated with past mining. Also, during the time Homestake owned and leased these properties Homestake constructed roads for drill pads, created drill pads and did trenching as part of mineral exploration. Some of these roads, pads and trenches would be located in the mineralized zone and would have cut through the mined area. This construction steepened slopes and removed vegetation that would have increased erosion for some period of time. Many of the pads and roads remain, and have been revegetated.

Elgin Mine

Homestake leased land around the Elgin Mine property and had under the lease exclusive possession of the mining property, with the lease reserving the right of the property owner to use the property for livestock grazing and other agricultural uses as long as it did not interfere with mining. The leased property does contain mining waste adjacent to West Fork Creek that has eroded into the creek including the period in which Homestake had control of the property. Also during the time of the lease, Homestake did mining exploration in the area, which would include cutting roads to drill pads, developing drill pads and possibly trenching. Some of these roads, pads and trenches would be located in the mineralized zone. This construction steepened slopes and removed vegetation that would have increased erosion for some period of time.

Wide Awake Mine

Homestake leased land in and around the Wide Awake Mine site. The lease gave Homestake exclusive possession of the mining property, with the lease reserving the right of the property

California Environmental Protection Agency

owner to use the property for livestock grazing and other agricultural uses as long as it did not interfere with mining. The leased property does contain mining waste adjacent to an ephemeral stream that has eroded into the stream including the period in which Homestake had control of the property. It is assumed that similar to the above properties, Homestake developed roads, drilling pads and trenching at the Wide Awake Mine Site. Some of these roads, pads and trenches would be located in the mineralized zone.

To more clearly assess the constituents of concerns (metals, salts, etc.) that could migrate from the mine sites and the locations where Homestake performed exploration activities on the mining properties please provide the following:

1. Location of all borings and trenching (this should include maps), their depth and any logging done;
2. Location of all roads constructed to provide access to borings, trenching and sampling; and
3. All sampling results related to identifying the mineralized zone.

We request this information be provided by **24 July 2009**. Should you have any questions, please call me at (916) 464-4626 or email me at vizzo@waterboards.ca.gov.

VICTOR J. IZZO

Senior Engineering Geologist

Title 27 Permitting and Mining Unit